

What is claimed is:

1. A method of enabling software to operate with hardware comprising:
 - receiving a license key that has information regarding hardware configuration, software configuration, license key transaction history and license key warranty period;
 - determining a software configuration from the license key;
 - determining if the software configuration is within the license key warranty period;
 - enabling the software with a time stamp based on the hardware configuration and the license warranty period.
2. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the warranty period indicates a time when new versions of software are not operational.
3. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the warranty period indicates a time when the software ceases to be operational.
4. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the information regarding hardware configuration from the license key includes a hardware serial number.

5. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the enabling step is further based on the information regarding license key transaction history from the license key.

6. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the license key is encrypted.

7. The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising determining a hardware configuration.

8. A system that enables software to operate with hardware comprising:

means for receiving a license key that has information regarding hardware configuration, software configuration, license key transaction history and license key warranty period;

means for determining a software configuration from the license key;

means for determining if the software configuration is within the license key warranty period;

means for enabling the software with a time stamp based on the hardware configuration and the license warranty period.

9. The system as recited in claim 8 wherein the warranty period indicates a time when new versions of software are not operational.

10. The system as recited in claim 8 wherein the warranty period indicates a time when the software ceases to be operational.

11. The system as recited in claim 8 wherein the information regarding hardware configuration from the license key includes a hardware serial number.

12. The system as recited in claim 8 wherein the means for enabling is further based on the information regarding license key transaction history from the license key.

13. The system as recited in claim 8 wherein the license key is encrypted.

14. The system as recited in claim 8 further comprising a means for determining a hardware configuration.

15. A device that enables software to operate with hardware comprising:

an input that receives a license key having information regarding hardware configuration, software configuration, license key transaction history and license key warranty period;

a software detection mechanism that determines a software configuration from the license key;

a software enabling mechanism that enables the software with a time stamp based on the hardware configuration and the license warranty period.

16. The device as recited in claim 15 wherein the warranty period indicates a time when new versions of software are not operational.

17. The device as recited in claim 15 wherein the warranty period indicates a time when the software ceases to be operational.

18. The device as recited in claim 15 wherein the information regarding hardware configuration from the license key includes a hardware serial number.

19. The device as recited in claim 15 wherein the software enabling mechanism further enables the software based on the information regarding license key transaction history from the license key.

20. The device as recited in claim 1 wherein the license key is encrypted.

21. The device as recited in claim 1 further comprising a hardware detection mechanism that determines a hardware configuration.